



## Vermont Healthy Community Design One Answer to Surgeon General's Call to Action



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### *National Initiative Announced to Increase Walking to Decrease Risk of Chronic Disease*

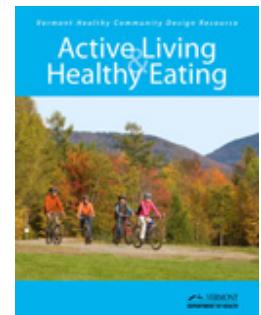
BURLINGTON —As the director of public works for the Village of Enosburg Falls, Garry Atherton knows every street, every intersection and every sidewalk. What he wants to see is more sidewalks, and many more walkable connectors to recreation fields, boat launches, existing trails, and parks.

As public works director since 1998, Atherton said he is proud of the way the village has come together to support how Enosburg addresses recreation and biking and walking paths.

"The village has made a team effort from the start to have a sidewalk on one side of every street," said Atherton. "There had been no 'I' in this team. The taxpayers and trustees and the community have been strong on this, and I have seen very positive support, especially for repairing and building new sidewalks."

Enosburg is an example of a community that understands the importance of building an infrastructure that supports walking and biking, particularly areas that were previously difficult to reach and discouraged people from getting there.

The U.S. Surgeon General announced on Wednesday a national "**Call to Action**" to promote walking and walkable communities. The Surgeon General aims to increase walking across the nation by calling for access to safe and convenient places to walk and wheelchair roll.



Only half of American adults get enough physical activity to reduce the risk of chronic disease, the leading cause of death in the U.S. Walking is an easy way to start and maintain a physically active lifestyle.

Obesity and overweight rates have remained steady in Vermont for youth and adults, with 20 percent of adults getting no leisure time physical activity. Sixty percent of adults and 29 percent of high school students are overweight or obese. Only 25 percent of youth meet the physical activity recommendations of 60 minutes per day every day.

"Compared to other states, our overall rates are low, but the Health Department is concerned because the rates are not declining," said Susan Kamp, health systems program administrator. "Helping to make walking and biking safe and convenient in communities is one of the key strategies we have to promote and support every chance we get."

Northwestern Medical Center has been a primary supporter of Enosburg's drive to create and sustain access to more recreational opportunities. Enosburg's efforts have been supported by state and federal funds since 2008, and Northwestern Medical Center funding has helped the village with sidewalk work, building a walking running path around the recreation field, and establishing a recreation committee to coordinate and communicate physical activity opportunities for families.

Amy Brewer, health educator at Northwestern Medical Center, has worked with Enosburg for the past six years.

"Enosburg has built and established a strong momentum in addressing physical activity using seed money from various sources to establish their overall vision for a healthy community," Brewer said.

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